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ABSTRACT

Drawings designed by three identical and three fraternal, normal, 6- and 7-year-old twin pairs are inspected for signs of a struggle for individual identity. Each twin must go through the process of becoming aware of him/herself as separate from the mother and must individuate from his/her twin as well. Interdependence may retard maturation. In the case of identical twins, the individuation process may be more complicated than it is among fraternal twins. Artwork is a reflection of ego integration and adequate functioning. Spatial relations, organization of the elements within the picture and symbolic representations demonstrate the ability of the ego to integrate unconscious material with reality. In the conjoint task of producing a drawing together, the dynamic interplay between the members drawing the picture enhances the potential of the art production as a graphic illustration of dimensions of the twinship. Comparison of the drawings of identical and fraternal twins and their behaviors in the drawing situations indicates that identical twins may have more anxiety and exhibit more rivalry than fraternal twins. Therapist determination of the relation of pathology to the twinship relation is a matter requiring further study. (Author/RH)

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A Study of the Conjoint Drawings of Identical and Fraternal Twins: A Pilot Study

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Running Head: Conjoint Drawings of Twins

Abstract

This study examines the conjoint drawings of normal latency age identical and fraternal twins in order to illuminate twin dynamics as described in the psychoanalytic literature on twinship. Following a brief discussion of twin psychosexual development, the conjoint drawings of three pairs of identical twins and three pairs of fraternal twins are discussed. The term conjoint refers to the directive to design a picture together.

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A Study of the Conjoint Drawings of Identical and Fraternal Twins: A Pilot Study

A review of the recent psychoanalytic literature on twins focuses on special problems of ego growth and object relationships and on the effect of the environment on identical and fraternal twins. Marjorie Leonard (1961) discusses the early twin identification which, she feels, resembles the mother-child interaction in many ways. She describes mutual inter-identification that exists between twins, both identical and fraternal, which results in part fusion of the self representation and the object representation of the other member. Each twin must go through the process of becoming aware of himself as separate from his mother and must individuate from his twin as well. Leonard describes the intertwin identification as a continuum and with the maturation of sensory perception one twin begins to perceive himself as separate from the other. However, in the same way as dependency on mother prevents complete separation of the maternal and self images in the single child, the dependency of one twin on the other may cause their self images to remain blurred. In the case of identical twins, the individuation process may be more complicated. What is the effect of constant confrontation with a mirror image? Anna Freud (1968) describes the narcissistic pleasure identical twins experience when they recognize them-

selves in their mirror image, the other twin. The pleasure of such recognition may promote narcissistic character formation and impair later identifications. Dorothy Burlingham (1952) believes that constant confrontation retards differentiation of self and twin, and inhibits clear delineation of body boundaries.

Interdependence may retard maturation in many areas. For example, Day (1932) studied the difference in language development between twins and singletons. He found that twins under 5 years of age were less advanced in their use of sentence structure and syntax. However, they were superior to non-twins in dramatic imitation, egocentric responses such as monologues, and in repetitive speech patterns. He concluded that for a model of speech, twins primarily use each other rather than adults or older children.

In singleton development the wish for fusion with the mother is opposed by the drive for distance from and introjection of the lost symbiotic mother. Similarly, aspects of the twinship, i. e. dependency and interidentification, are opposed by a drive toward separation and individuation. However, intertwin identification is often emphasized by factors such as the degree of similarity, parental attitudes, or attitudes of persons in the environment. The degree of similarity in physical likeness and its effect on intertwin identification and diffusion of ego boundaries is debated

throughout the twin literature. As stated above, some authors believe that constant confrontation with a mirror image fosters intense intertwin identification and a diffuseness of ego boundaries. Further, fraternal twins may be exposed to a more diversified environment, in part because of inherited differences. Parents, peers, siblings and teachers can distinguish between fraternal twins more easily and relate to them as individuals.

Joseph (1961) discusses the expectation that twins show similar behavior and temperament and the ability to reach each other's thoughts. This attitude presents obstacles in the way of development of a sense of identity and self-image. Burlingham (1952) discusses the fantasy, among singletons, of having a twin during the latency stage. Children in latency are overcome by feelings of lonliness and solitude when they have been disappointed by their parents in the oedipel situation so that for the child who fantasies a twin to overcome his lonliness, the sight of real twins appears as the prototype of what they had imagined for themselves. Great envy, admiration, even awe shown by brothers and sisters, peers and others for their twin relationship make the twins feel that they possess something attractive and interesting. For others, however, it may be quite different. They may find unpleasant the surprise their appearance makes.

Separating twins by school, especially with the passing

of the oedipel phase and its characteristic feeling of loss, may evoke conflict for the twin who must suppress and repress his twinship. Unconscious derivations may surface in the latency period and beyond, long after the conflict of twin separation-individuation has been forgotten.

After the oedipel stage, growth and development modify an existing structure. For twins, the structure is different, and they cannot avoid the difficulties inherent in their twinship, just as ordinary children cannot help being influenced by the fact of their being the eldest or youngest. For most twins, although the effect of intertwin identification remain, they are not nearly so pathogenic as one may expect.

The Artwork

Artwork is a reflection of ego integration and adequate functioning: spatial relations, organization of the elements within the picture and symbolic representations demonstrate the ability of the ego to integrate unconscious material with reality. In the conjoint task, the dynamic interplay between the members drawing the picture enhances the potential of the art production as a graphic illustration of the twinship.

The drawings of three sets of identical twins, and three sets of fraternal twins are examined. The sample is matched for age groups, i. e. two pairs of six year old twins, one identical, the other fraternal. All children are enrolled in regular elementary school programs, and are of at least average intelligence. None have a history of emotional

problems or mental retardation. The background information was obtained from the twins' mothers at the time of the art interview.

The first set of twins to be discussed is identical twins, John and Eric, age 6. Developmentally, both children progressed at a normal pace. Until approximately age 3, John would look in the mirror and say, "Hi, Eric". Currently, John and Eric are in the first grade at school and are separated for the first time. John has difficulty with the separation, complains of having no friends, and "acts as if he lost a part of himself at times". He has trouble concentrating in school and tries to sneak into Eric's classroom. John in eneuretic when extremely tired or anxious about something, and occasionally sucks his thumb in bed. Eric has made the adjustment to separation in school and makes friends easily. Eric is protective of John and looks out for him. The twins were dressed alike for the interview, and were asked to draw a picture together. John stated "He draws with me", and Eric stated "No, he draws with me!" Two attempts were discarded. For the third and final attempt the twins decided on Christmas as the theme(see Figure 1). John drew the gifts on the left, Eric the fireplace and candle on the right. Eric drew the red flame, and John superimposed yellow over the red. At this point, the project was abandoned in favor of a fist fight

between the boys.

Apparently the task is too anxiety-provoking for John and Eric. While Eric is the stronger, more protective member of the twinship and John the more vulnerable, suffering signs of separation anxiety at home and school, they are not able to establish their roles in the drawing process. The rivalry is perhaps more healthy for the twins as they fight to establish their identity. It is at the point when imagery fused in the drawing that the fight erupted. The drawing lacks elaboration because the fight erupted. What is seen, however sparse, reflects a high degree of sophistication for drawings done by any 6 year old children. The twins are drawing on an implied baseline, the edge of the paper. What is seen is the beginning of the schema in which all elements relate to one central theme. In other drawings done by John and Eric, alone, without the other twin's assistance, they both added details which would indicate a high level of awareness and intelligence, such as teeth, and eyeballs eyelashes, laces on shoes, on their drawings of the human figure. Together they are not so productive, or precocious. The rivalry, perhaps based on a fear of fusion, inhibits their ability to function on a level equal to their ability and talent.

Burlingham(1952) discusses the intense sibling rivalry in twins, and she feels that it is related to sharing mother and other key persons in the environment. This rivalry is

often more evident in identicals who must fight harder to establish a strong sense of self with whom mother may identify. The rivalry is evident among the identical twins that follow, either graphically or in the interaction.

Same sex fraternal twins Diane and Dee, also age 6 years, looked alike after birth, but the resemblence ceased at 18 months. Developmental milestones were normal, with no unusual childhood trauma reported. Currently the twins are in the first grade and are separated with no difficulty. The twins were not dressed alike for the interview, and are easily distinguished. Diane has brown hair, and Dee has blonde. The twins were quiet and diffidently approached the task (see Figure 2).

Dee stayed on the left side of the page, drawing the flower, tree, girl and sun. Diane drew the turkey on the right hand side, relying on a stereotyped technique. The drawing is unrelated in content, although no line separates the drawing in two. The twins were comfortable with the technique, worked individually with little verbalization except to ask for crayons, and were satisfied with the product. There was no excessive amount of anxiety noted, as seen with the identicals of the same age. The drawing reflects age-appropriate features. For example, all of the elements on the left are about equal in size. Children of this age often size objects according to importance. The "girl" is drawn the same size of the tree, but the incorporation of elements from the environment is a reflection of lessened

egocentricity. All of the shapes are clearly recognizable which is age-appropriate as well.

Identical twin girls, Kay and Jane, age 7, showed normal development throughout their early years. They have no other siblings, and currently are in the second grade at school. They have never been separated from each other and their mother feels this would be quite terrifying for them. The twins are very protective of one another, and get identical grades on their report cards.

The twins were dressed alike for the interview, and were terrified of the new situation. Jane crouched behind Kay when approached. It appeared they would not draw at all, but when told they would work together on a picture, they consented. Their behavior during the task was similar. When one child leaned on her hand, the other child leaned on her hand. When one child was asked a question, they both answered. The paper was divided by a solid line, drawn by Kay. Jane drew the devil on the left, Kay the rose on the right (see Figure 3). They finished quickly, turned the paper over, and reversed the procedure. Jane drew a rose and Kay the devil. Neither twin worked on the other's side of the paper. No other set of twins, identical or fraternal, separated the page graphically, although one see implied separation (Figure 2). The solid line prevents a fusion of imagery, and may be a manifestation of the lack of repression concerning the twinship in identical twins. The anxiety and fear the twins experience

in a new situation is apparent by the subject matter and the agitated line quality. Their need to model one another is demonstrated not only by imitating each other's movements and speech, but by turning the paper over to draw what the other had done. By the age of 7, a child is usually putting everything in the drawing on a baseline, reflecting a conscious awareness that he/she is part of the environment. In the case of Jane and Kay, there is no baseline, or use of symbols characteristic of a typical latency age awareness of the environment. The symbols chosen are at odds-a flower and devil. The body image lacks fluidity, appears confused and does not reflect a characteristic latency age interest in addition of detail. When a child is preoccupied intrapsychically, then he is not able to decenter as readily and take into account aspects of the environment. Perhaps Jane and Kay are experiencing difficulty establishing their identity and individuality. The page was divided at the outset. One drew a person, the other an object. An observer would have no difficulty discerning flower from devil. If one twin were a person, the other an object, there is no identity confusion. However, the need to be identical is reflected by turning the page over to draw what the other had done.

It is very difficulty to tell the twins apart. They are dressed in an identical fashion, with similar hairstyles. It is understandable that mother, teachers, and others have difficulty identifying with each child as an individual. Their identity, for most, lies in their similarity.

Same sex fraternal twin girls, Patty and Maureen, age 7, show an unremarkable developmental history. There are two older brothers in the family, ages 9 and 10. The resemblance between the twins was strong until approximately age 2, then diminished. The twins were separated for the first time in grade one. No difficulty in separation was seen. Currently, the twins are in the second grade and refer to one another as their best friend, but have other friends as well. Separation continues in school, and does not appear to bother either girl.

Patty and Maureen were not dressed alike for the interview, and it was easy to tell them apart. They too were extremely shy, although they easily started and completed the task. Together the girls worked out a theme, decided who would draw what, and began. The result is an integrated schema, with characteristic latency age elements. The twins did not divide the page, nor stay on their own side (see Figure 4).

Note the pairs of objects, the flowers along the baseline. While they have not actually drawn twins, the pairs of objects suggest a manifestation of an unconscious awareness of the phenomena of being one of a pair. Note the characteristic latency age schema, consisting of a baseline, flowers, stars, and house, and the order in spatial relationships. Some exaggeration of important parts is still seen, i. e. the pair of large flowers. While one can sense the anxiety and confusion in the gestalt of the drawing by Kay and Jane, this picture has a different overall effect. It is more pleasant,

well defended, and fluid.

Patty and Maureen are easy to tell apart, and have other siblings which help to diffuse the "twinness". Kay and Jane do not have other siblings. Their chief role for identification is one another.

Identical twin boys, Mark and Greg, age 10, show a normal developmental pattern, with the exception of allergies and asthma, which plague them both. When the twins were approximately 4 years old, their mother was hospitalized for several weeks, at which time the twins were separated. This was the first, and quite traumatic for both. Since this time, Mark and Greg have been continuously separated in school with no difficulty. Both are in grade five; other siblings include one younger brother.

The boys were not dressed alike for the interview, and were easily distinguishable. For the drawing task, both were hesitant. When they began, one boy would draw first, then the other (See Figure 5). Tension mounted as one dinosaur graphically engulfed the other in flames. Excessive erasures, as well as the strong presence of connections between objects is noted. All of the elements in the drawing are connected by the fire from the monsters' mouths, with the exception of the tree to the left. One twin, finding his dinosaur engulfed by fire, became angry and countered the attack by drawing more fire. The sibling rivalry is apparent. With less controls exhibited by Mark and Greg, one may have witnessed a fight similar to the one which erupted between identical twins, John and Eric. It is interesting to note that the younger

brother was present while Mark and Greg completed the task, and three dinosaurs are seen in the drawing-two large and one smaller, to the right. The drawing reflects several age appropriate features. For example, there is an escape from naturalism(in boys particularly) as children enter puberty. This is a result of an increasingly egocentric attitude. Rather than depict actual figures engaged in combat, Mark and Greg have selected dinosaurs, depicting them in a stylized cartoon-like manner. There is a removal from the baseline, but at the same time an awareness of the diminishing size of distant objects. Note the tree on the left. The boys selected drawing media inherently structured, a pencil. This, in addition to the excessive erasures and cartoon-like figures reflect some anxiety, as well as the characteristic pre-pubescent egocentricity.

Regina and Colleen, fraternal twins, age 10, are the only set of twins in the group which were born premature. As a result of being 2 months early, the twins were housed in separate incubators for 6 weeks. Later development appeared normal. They were separated in school at the beginning of second grade. Currently, both girls are in separate fifth grade classrooms.

The twins did not resemble one another more than regular siblings, and were dressed differently. They began the task , each announcing to the other what she would draw. They kept to their own side of the page. Regina had less difficulty

than Colleen in completing her side of the picture. Colleen was fearful of criticism, and afraid of making an error. Colleen would whimper if Regina corrected her side of the page, and Regina expressed fear than Colleen would 'mess her side up'(See Figure 6).

Colleen completed the swing, sun and mailbox on the left, and Regina the house on the right. The result was a pleasant unified schema similar to the drawing of fraternal twins Patty and Maureen (Figure 4). One sees a conscious approach to detail and decoration, an age-appropriate phenomena, as well as an incorporation of things from the environment. Note, for example, the house on the left with its elaborate bricks, attic window, curtains, and iron fence. This section was done by Regina, who exhibited self confidence and more feminine behavior during the interview. Colleen drew the other elements also with a self-conscious decorative quality. She put a face on the sun which appears, again, more decorative than regressive. Colleen was not as comfortable or self assured about her work, and labored over the picture. Conflict was seen in the interaction, but it seemed to be a sibling rivalry seen in singletons, when one may be prettier or more outgoing than the other, rather than a fight for identity. The interaction lacked the intensity seen in the other twins, and the conflict is not evident in the drawing.

Conclusion

A review of the psychoanalytic literature on twins il-

luminates several areas of development in which ego growth and object relationships are subtly altered by the presence of a twin. Twins must individuate from mother, and from one another as well. Does the degree of similarity in identical twins complicate individuation? Perhaps parents, or persons in the environment, who find it easier to refer to twins as a unit, foster mutual interidentification. In the drawings we have seen the fight for identity emerging as twins struggle to establish an identity in harmony with, but separate from, the other twin. At some stages, this harmony is not possible, especially when fear of fusion may intrapsychially plague the twins. Identical twins appeared to suffer more anxiety and exhibit more rivalry in this study. One pair of identical twins found it necessary to graphically divide the page. The other two sets of twins could not complete the task when one's imagery became superimposed or engulfed the other's. It is possible that repression of the twinship is easier and more durable for fraternal twins. The fraternal twins were able to graphically move in and out of each other's space, compliment imagery with imagery, or draw separately, with less anxiety and no need to graphically divide the page.

Identical twins are constantly reminded of their status by the presence of the other twin. The mirror image, pairs of objects are a reality in identical and fraternal twins, part of their reality which is unquestionably different than that of singletons. Denial of that reality would be

pathological, as would an exaggeration of a psychic tie between the twins.

Twins represent a special problem in treatment. A thorough understanding of twin psychodynamics is essential. Observation of normal behavior, and a close look at drawings enables one to delineate normal twin behavior, and point to what may be pathological. The means for the therapist to determine whether pathology is related to the twinship, or separate from twinning, or whether pathology and twinship are intertwined as the psychic structure in a singleton is intertwined with his pathology, remains an area for considerable future study.

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FIGURE 1

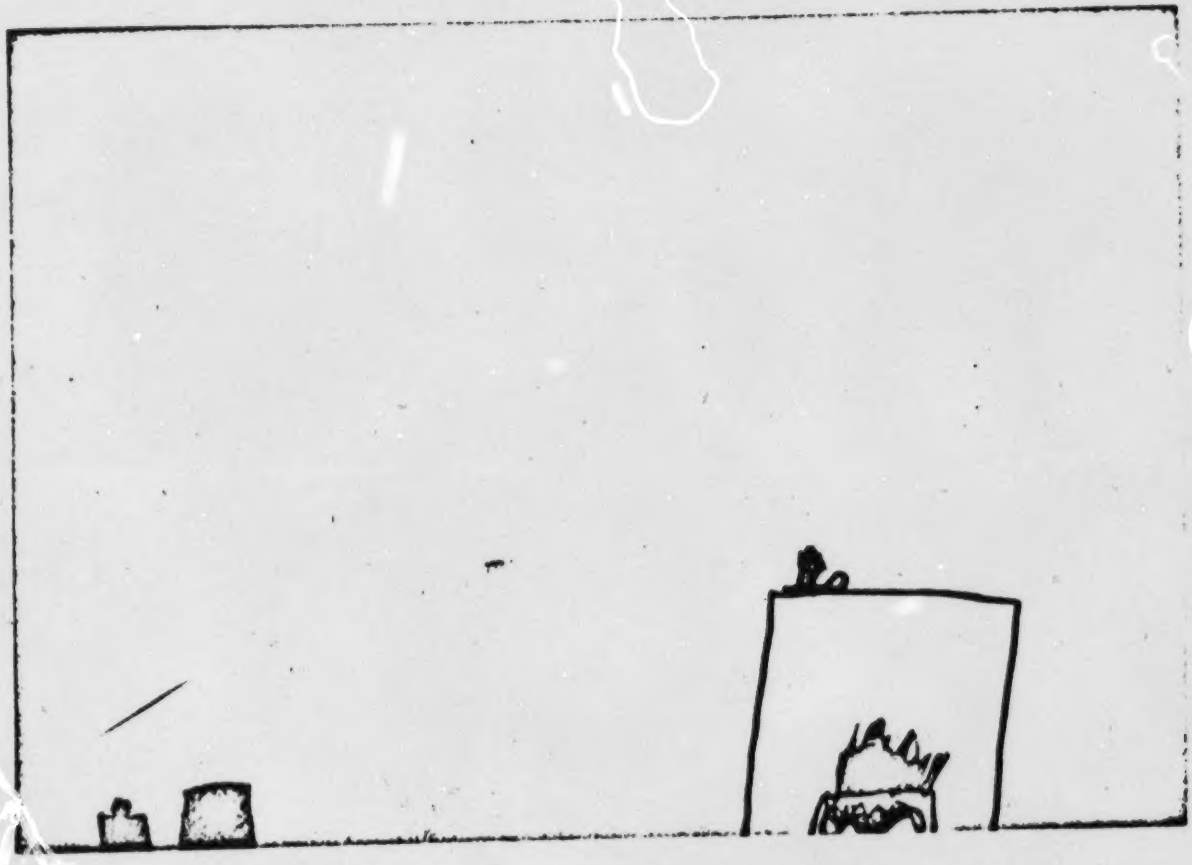

FIGURE 2

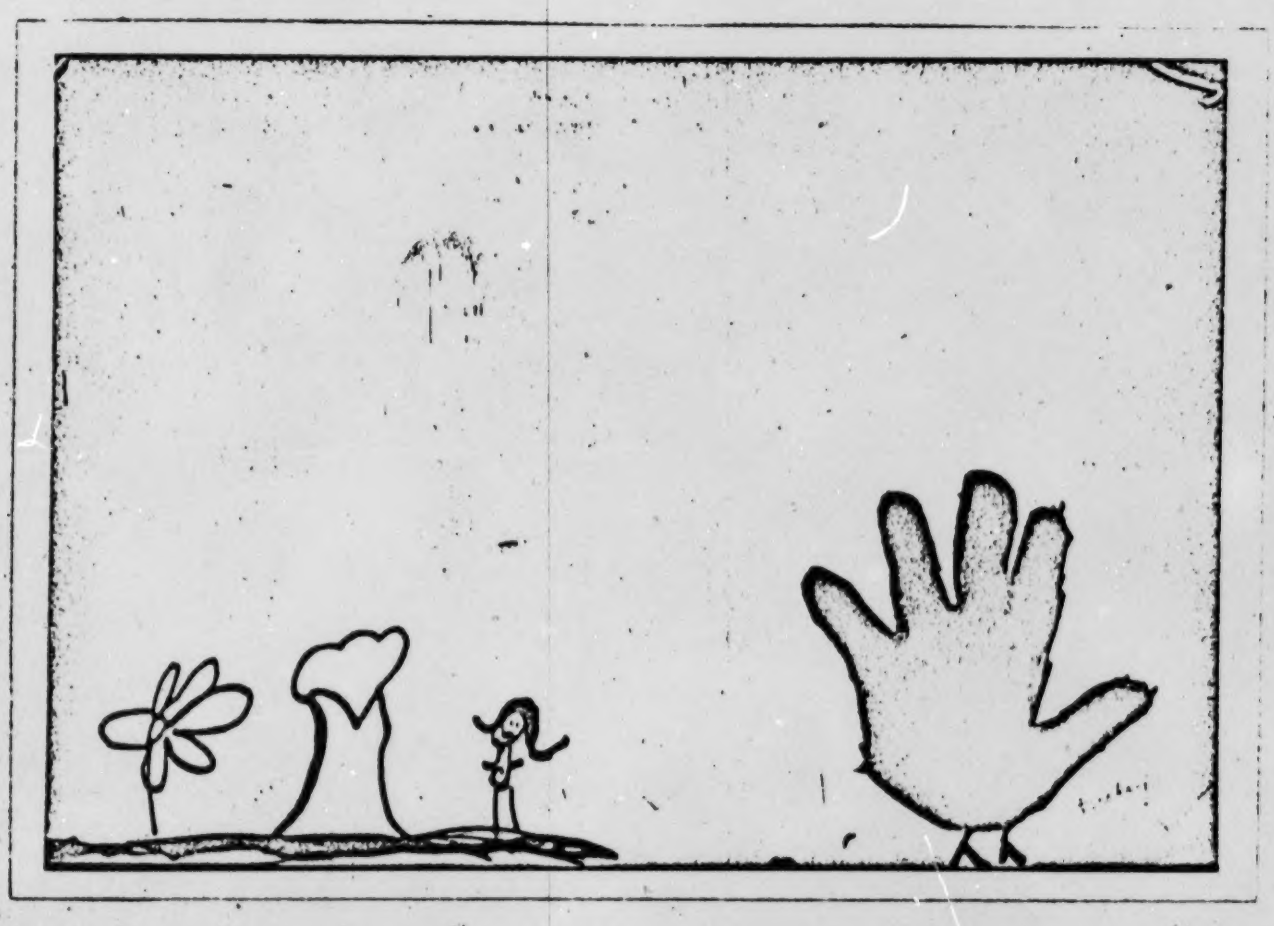

FIGURE 3

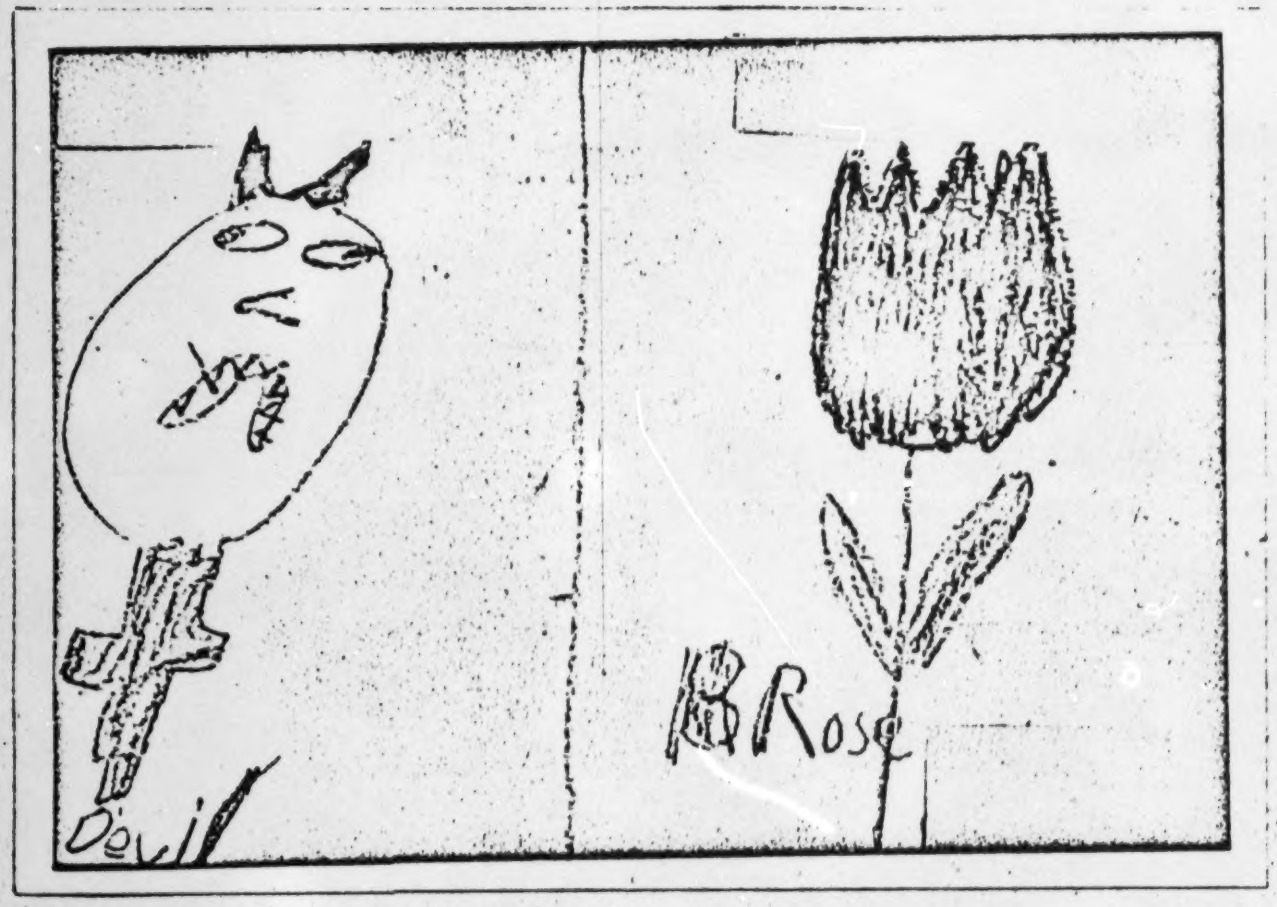

FIGURE 4

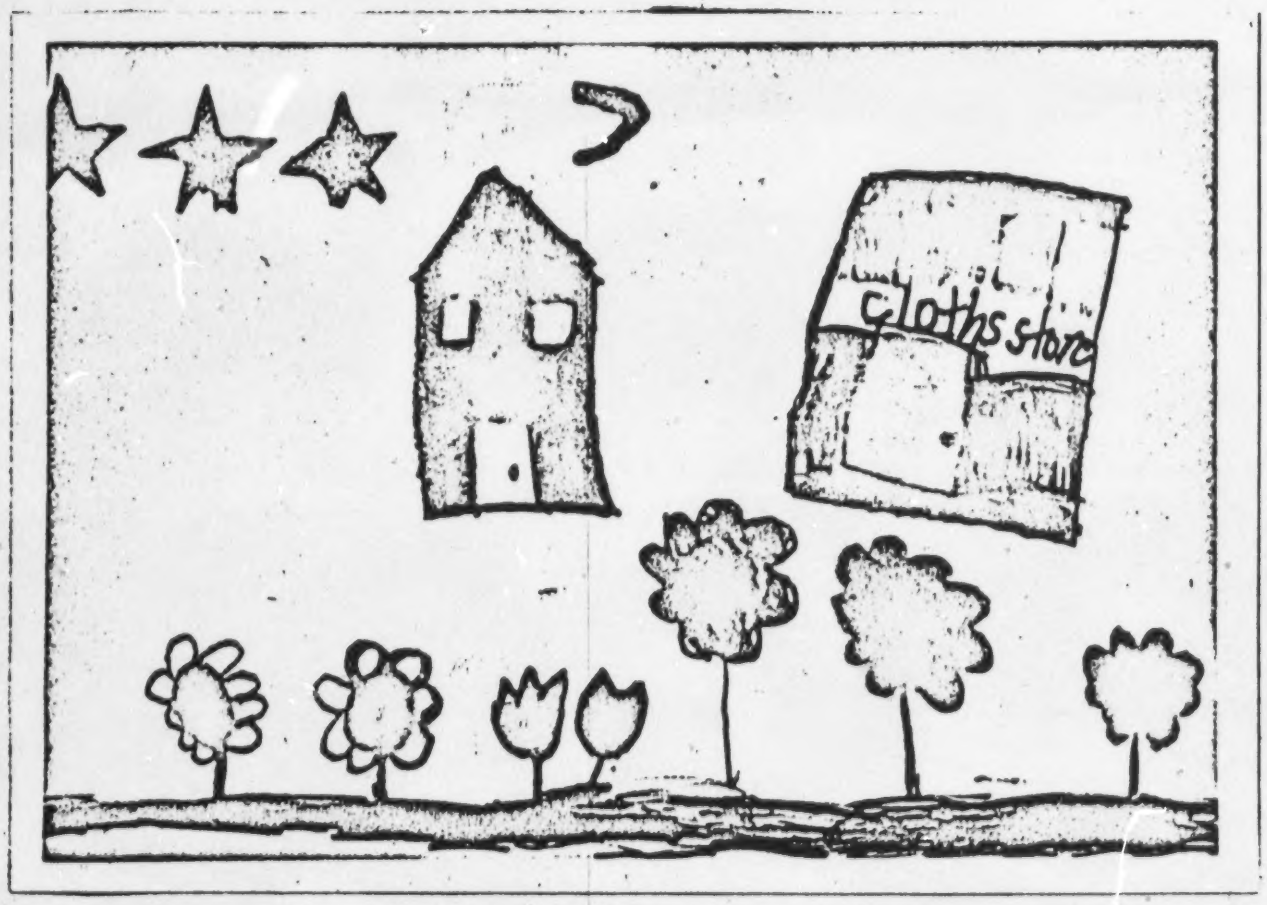

FIGURE 5

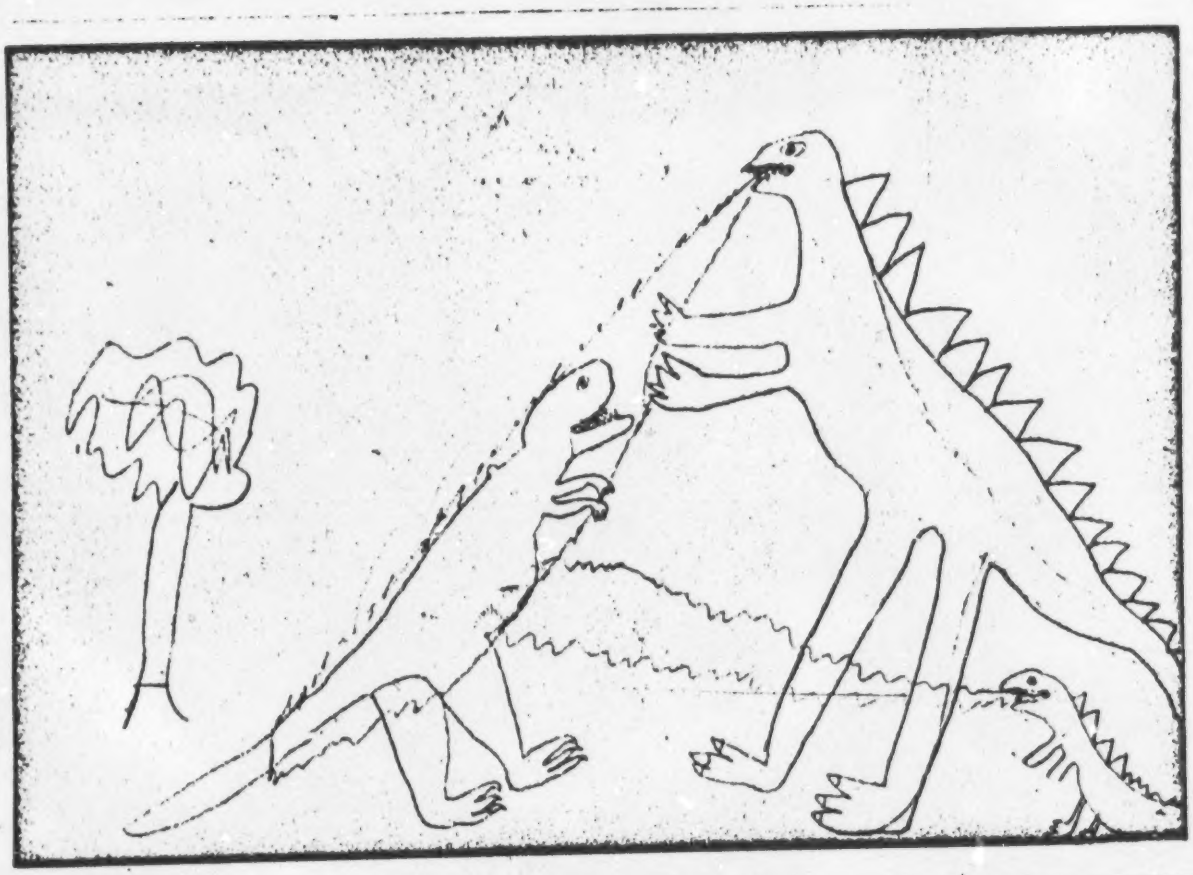

FIGURE 6